

Behind the Badge: Busy time for Council Bluffs Police Department

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There have been a lot of different events that have taken place since my last article.

First was the budget process. It was a pleasant experience this year. The command staff of this department worked together and provided a realistic and sensible approach to the budget, keeping in mind the goals set forth by the city.

Though I was personally reminded why I chose law enforcement instead of accounting for a career, Art Hill, the city finance director, was a pleasure to work with. With his assistance, the command staff not only learned a few things but were instrumental in providing a common sense approach to meet our demands to continue to provide a quality police service.

We are also putting together the process for promotional examinations. We are working with the Human Resource Department and the Civil Service Commission as well as the police union to come up with a promotional exam process that is fair and applicable to our individual department.

Eligible police officers will take exams for the rank of sergeant. Eligible sergeants will take exams for the rank of lieutenant. Eligible lieutenants will take exams for the rank of captain. These exams, if approved by the civil service commission, will take place throughout the summer months.

At exam time in the police department, the entire department takes on a different feel. I cannot explain it, but it is a time when the officers who take part in the process do have the additional stress placed upon them. I've heard more than one officer who has been fortunate enough to make the rank of captain comment they were glad that they did not have to take any more promotional exams.

The promotional list, once certified, will be good for two years. Officers whose names appear on the list when an opening in rank occurs during the time the eligibility list is certified will be in the running for promotion. We try to keep an active list of officers certified for promotions because you never know when an opening might occur.

We are also gearing up for the upcoming St. Patrick's Day celebrations that will take place throughout this week. We will have extra patrols Wednesday. I can tell you from firsthand experience that this particular celebration can be the busiest day of the year on the police department. I don't know if there are any academic studies to indicate why St. Patrick's Day can be busy for a department, but I do know it generally is busy.

In my opinion, I think that everyone is ready to celebrate the end of winter, especially if the weather cooperates; and this day is as good as any. Or it just might be the large Irish population of the city.

Finally, I had the pleasure to answer a letter from a student at Bloomer School. He was interested in our city and the functions of the police department. I hope he got the answers to his questions.

– Ralph O'Donnell is chief of the Council Bluffs Police Department